

## CHAPTER IV

### THE OFFICIAL FESTIVALS OF OSIRIS

#### § I. *The Festival at Sais*

SUCH, then, were the principal events of the farmer's calendar. With the in ancient Egypt, and such the simple religious rites by <sup>the</sup><sup>^</sup><sup>^</sup><sup>^</sup>~~x~~. which he celebrated them. But we have still to consider the Osirian festivals of the official calendar, so far as these <sup>^RC^</sup> the are described by Greek writers or recorded on the monu- Egyptian

<sup>T</sup> . . . <sup>1</sup> . . . , 1 i  
festivals

ments. in examining them it is necessary to bear in mind ceased to that on account of the movable year of the old Egyptian <sup>rotate</sup> calendar the true or astronomical dates of the official festivals the natural must have varied from year to year, at least until the adoption <sup>>ear</sup> of the fixed Alexandrian year in 30 B.C. From that time onward, apparently, the dates of the festivals were determined by the new calendar, and so ceased to rotate throughout the length of the solar year. At all events Plutarch, writing about the end of the first century, implies that they were then fixed, not movable; for though he does not mention the Alexandrian calendar, he clearly dates the festivals by it.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the long festal calendar of

<sup>1</sup> Thus with regard to the Egyptian month of Athyr in the Alexandrian calendar, he tells us that the sun namely October 28- November 26. was then in the sign of the Scorpion Again, he says (op. cit. 43) that the (Isis et Osiris, 13), that Athyr cor- festival of the beginning of spring was responded to the Athenian month held at the new moon of the month Pyanepson and the Boeotian month Phamenoth, which, in the Alexandrian Damatruis (op. cit. 69), that it was the calendar, corresponded to February 24- month of sowing (id.), that in it the March 26. Further, he tells us that a Nile sank, the earth was laid bare by festival was celebrated on the 23rd of

the retreat of the inundation, the leaves  
Phaophi after the autumn  
equinox  
fell, and the nights grew longer than *(op.*  
*cit.* 52), and in the Alexandrian  
the days (*op.* *cit.* 39). These *inclica-*  
calendar Phaophi began on  
September  
tions agree on the whole with the date 28, a  
few days after the autumn equinox.  
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